

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 28, 2005

The Honorable Joe Barton  
Chairman  
The House Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Dingell  
Ranking Member  
The House Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2322 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Barton and Ranking Member Dingell,

As your Committee begins to draft legislation re-writing the Telecommunications Act, we need to ensure government policies protect the infrastructure that makes advanced services, including broadband, possible and available to everyone in the United States.

Today, the nation as a whole is the beneficiary of its strong commitment to universal service, which is a social compact, embracing the idea that all Americans, both urban and rural, are entitled to quality telecommunications services that are comparable in price and scope. The nation's universal service system effectively yields the highest possible level of telecommunications connectivity among the public. Today, the program emphasizes an assurance that necessary cost recovery is available to those that make the commitment to serve the nation's most economically challenging markets. This is the key to building the nationwide network that has guaranteed all Americans the ability to enjoy an unprecedented era of access to information.


This advanced nationwide network allows for new communications services, such as IP-enabled services and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). These advanced broadband services have great potential to benefit American consumers, especially those in rural communities, by bringing greater services at affordable prices. It also gives Americans, regardless of their geographic location, the ability to telework, get an education through on-line courses, access state, local and federal government services, bargain shop for any item they desire, and receive health care services otherwise unattainable in their area.


As the United States moves into the broadband age, it is imperative that we do not forget the principles that have served us so well. Let's make sure the commitment to universal access to communications services is protected during a rewrite so that all Americans can have access to advanced communications, such as DSL, cable, wireless, and satellite.


We respectfully request that your Committee incorporate the principles on the reverse when drafting legislation re-writing the Telecommunications Act. If incorporated, these principles will help ensure that all Americans have access to advanced broadband services at affordable rates.


Sincerely,


  
Representative Gil Gutknecht

  
Representative Bart Stupak

  
Representative John Peterson

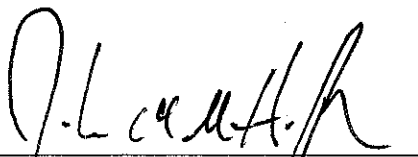
  
Representative Allen Boyd

  
Representative Lincoln Davis

  
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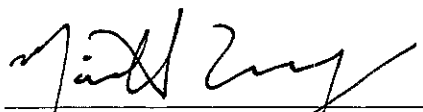
  
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Representative Collin Peterson

  
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Representative Nick Rahall

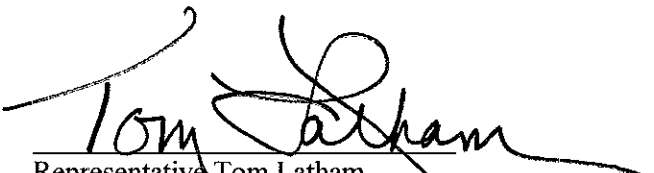
  
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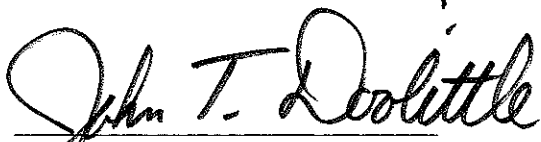
  
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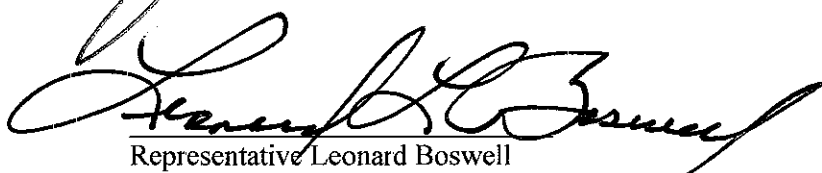
  
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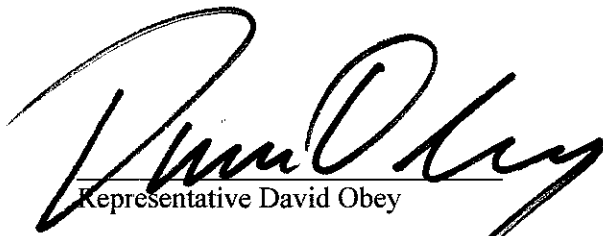
  
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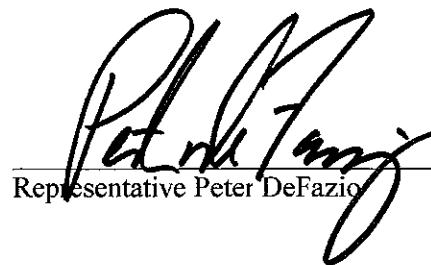
  
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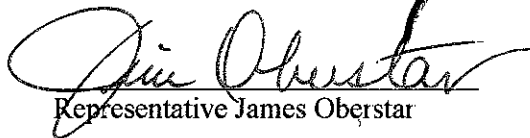
  
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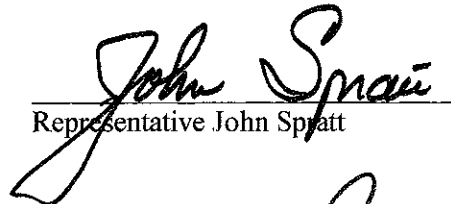
  
Representative John Doolittle

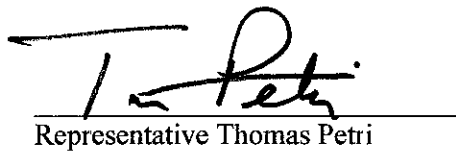
  
Representative Leonard Boswell

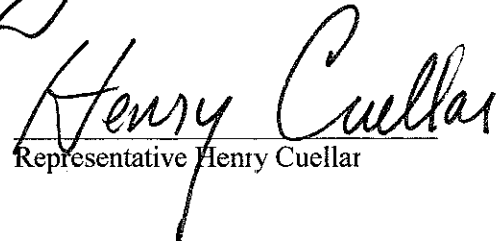
  
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Representative Peter DeFazio

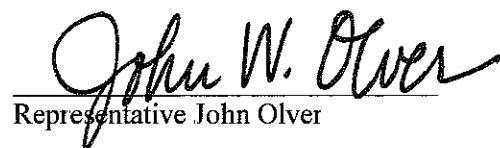
  
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Representative John Spratt

  
Representative Thomas Petri

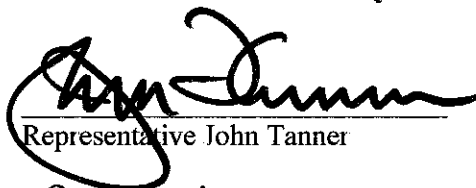
  
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Representative Ed Case

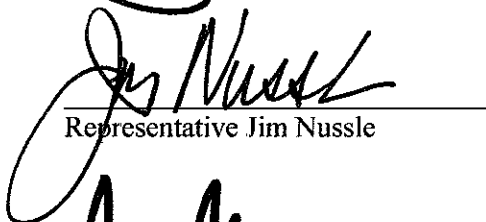
  
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Representative Stephanie Herseth

  
Representative Ron Kind

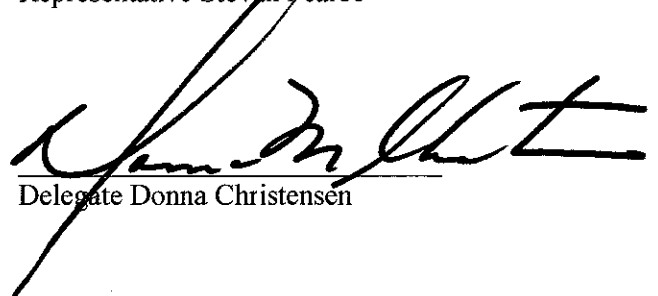
  
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Representative Earl Pomeroy


  
Representative Jim Nussle

  
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Delegate Donna Christensen


  
Representative Marilyn Musgrave

  
Representative Chet Edwards

  
Representative Ruben Hinojosa

  
Representative Raul Grijalva

  
Representative Rodney Alexander

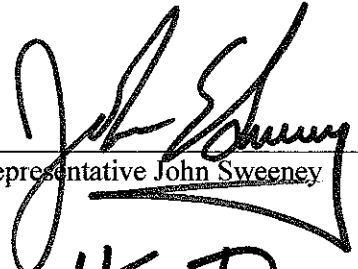
  
Representative Mark Green

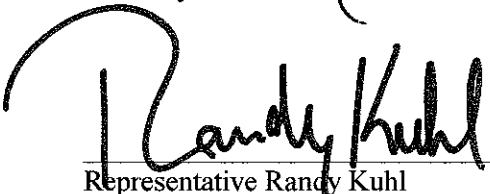
  
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Representative Mike McIntyre

  
Representative Rick Renzi

  
Representative John Sweeney

  
Representative Randy Kuhl


  
Representative Harold Rogers

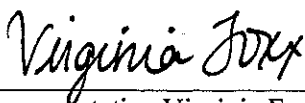
  
Representative Mike Ross

  
Representative Lane Evans

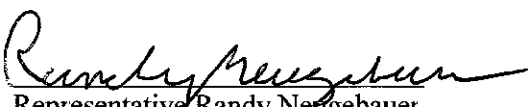
  
Representative Jerry Moran

  
Representative Walter Jones

  
Representative Jim Gibbons

  
Representative Virginia Foxx

  
Representative John Salazar

  
Representative Randy Neugebauer

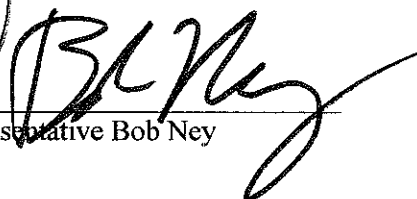
  
Representative Dan Boren

  
Representative Shelley Moore Capito

  
Representative Tom Udall

  
Representative Jim Marshall

  
Representative William Jefferson

  
Representative Bob Ney

## **Telecommunications Act Re-write Principles**

### **Universal Service**

- The universal service fund must continue to be an industry funded mechanism and not supported through general tax revenues. The fund must also not be subject to the Anti-Deficiency Act.
- Universal service assessments shall ensure that all segments of the communications industry share in the support of this program that shall be for the purpose of constructing, supporting and maintaining advanced networks to benefit all consumers.
- The base of contributors to universal service must be expanded to include everyone who uses the infrastructure. This includes, but is not limited to: all providers of 2-way communications regardless of technology used to ensure competitive neutrality.
- Universal service support distributed to a carrier must be based on their actual cost of service to ensure accountability and competitive neutrality.

### **Intercarrier Compensation**

- Carriers must be compensated for all traffic utilizing their networks.
- Carriers must identify their traffic to discourage arbitrage and Phantom Traffic.

### **Network Access/Interconnection**

- All providers must continue to have the obligation to allow other providers to interconnect with their networks regardless of technology utilized.

### **Access to advanced broadband**

- Investment in rural networks is essential for rural America to remain competitive and have access to advanced broadband infrastructure.
- Inter-modal competition must be encouraged to drive affordable broadband to rural America.